

Atlanta terror arrest sends wake-up call

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The arrest of a suspected terrorist in metro Atlanta could lead to a change in anti-terrorism programs on Fort McPherson and Fort Gillem.

Lyglenson Lemorin, 31, was arrested June 22 on charges of conspiring to support the al Qaeda terrorist organization and to commit war against the U.S. His arrest came in conjunction with the arrest of six men in Miami. They are suspected of planning to attack the Sears Tower in Chicago, the FBI headquarters in Miami and other governmental buildings in the Miami area.

Terry Thomas, force protection officer, U.S. Army Garrison Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security, says the arrest of Lemorin and the others has raised a red flag. "Where there is one suspected terrorist, you have to operate on the premise that there are more out there," said Thomas.

Because of the arrests, the Force Protection Threat Working Group (garrison staff, intelligence/security, law enforcement and local agencies) will meet to see if they need to make any recommendations for changes in the antiterrorism/force protection posture for the installations.

In a press conference after the arrests, U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales stressed that

there was no immediate threat because the group did not have explosives or other materials it was seeking.

Still, Gonzales said the arrests underscored the danger of homegrown terrorists who view their home country as the enemy.

Five of the men are U.S. citizens, Lemorin is a Haitian-born permanent legal resident and the seventh suspected terrorist is a Haitian living here illegally.

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**-Alberto Gonzales
U.S. Attorney General**

a, quote, 'full ground war' against the United States," said Gonzales. "That quote is from the investigation of these individuals, who also allegedly stated the desire to, quote, 'kill all the devils we can.' They hoped for their attacks to be, quote, 'just as good or greater than 9/11.'"

Thomas says the arrests should serve to remind everyone that since Atlanta is such a growing and diverse city, and also home to the

world's busiest airport, everyone should operate under the mindset that he or she is a target.

"Terrorists are planning to harm our way of life, our freedom. They are going to work hard at it. We need to work hard to make it more difficult for them to get where they want to be," he said.

Being aware of your surroundings is something Thomas says everyone (Soldiers, DA civilian employees and family members of both) need to practice at all times.

"When you go downtown with your family, you still have to make sure you are aware of what is going on around you," he said. "Understand, you have that decal on your car, people look at your car and know exactly who you are and where you are working at."

There are a few simple preventative measures Thomas recommends implementing as everyday procedures:

- Don't leave anything visible inside a vehicle to tie you to the office. Something as simple as having a uniform hanging in plain sight because it was just picked it up from the dry cleaners can mark someone as potential target. Put things like that in the trunk.

- Watch the activity around you. Take notice of people looking at your vehicle or trying to tamper with the decal on your vehicle.

- Keep in tune with the local news. Find out what is going on in the community. Take particular notice if people start asking questions that shouldn't be asked – How many Soldiers are on post?, What does it take to gain access to installation?, Who is the highest ranking officer? – those are targeted questions for official use only and a flag needs to go up. Make mental notes of the person asking the question and when and where it occurred, and then report the incident to your supervisor or a security officer.

- Always think operational security (OPSEC), at work, at home and in the community.

Thomas says information management is a huge problem right now. "I'll go to a restaurant and hear Soldiers at another table who are off duty and out of uniform talking about things they shouldn't be talking about (number of troops deployed, information that goes on

in the workplace)," he said. "If I can hear them, you have to wonder who else is hearing them and what are they going to do with that information?"

Gonzales pointed out that the arrests show how the terror threat is constantly changing.

"Terrorist threats may come from smaller, more loosely defined cells who are not affiliated with al-Qaida but who are inspired by a violent jihadist message," he said. "Left unchecked, these homegrown terrorists may prove to be as dangerous as groups like al-Qaida."

It's because of that changing threat Thomas stresses the importance of required annual training. Antiterrorism (AT) level one training is available online at <https://atlevel1.dtic.mil/at/>. The AT training can be taken by Soldiers, DA civilians and family members. Also, mandatory SAEDA training is scheduled for September, and will be held on Fort McPherson and Fort Gillem.

However, Thomas is quick to remind that the annual training is just the first step in force protection. He said individual units and departments need to occasionally exercise their plans.

"If we have a plan in place and don't exercise the plan, it's like not having a plan," he said. "If you don't know if it works or not, it's no good to you."

Force Protection Conditions

Alpha – Expect random vehicle checks and enhanced crime prevention efforts. When the Force Protection Conditions increase, you should be alert for suspicious activity and reduce your personal exposure.

Bravo – Commanders will increase ID checks and inspections of facilities, deliveries and packages. Some traffic will be restricted and vehicle barriers emplaced. You should be extra alert, limit public exposure, and think about personal plans in the case of an incident.

Charlie – Commanders will further restrict access to military facilities, increase barriers against vehicle attacks and increase random security patrols. You can expect special instructions and additional duties to support unit security.

Delta – Commanders bring their units to a high state of alert and many mission activities are delayed or canceled. All nonessential activities and movements are suspended and resources are focused on defense against attack. Expect to suspend normal activities and adopt an alert, defensive posture. Immediately check with your leadership for instructions.